

For Immediate Release

For the past 16 months our citizens, elected and non-elected, have witnessed and contributed to an in-depth look into our community's economic development process. This topic has dominated newspaper headlines, council meetings and I'm sure, at times, it has been a hot topic around the water cooler. This review process has gathered a lot of information from the public, elected officials and economic development experts. Recommendations and ideas were proposed and the Jefferson County Indiana Vision and Economic Strategy Team (JC-INVEST) plan was presented. Since February, this plan has been scrutinized and changes have been made. However, we seem to have come to an impasse that will keep us from a FORMAL agreement at this time. I emphasize "formal" because most involved with the dialogue have said, "I agree with the concept of JC-INVEST".

After much thought over the past few days, I have come to this conclusion: It is time for us to stop, step back and take a deep breath. It's okay to revisit the JC-INVEST concept in the future; however, at this time, I won't be pursuing a formal agreement. In light of what transpired at the last County Commissioners' meeting, it is obvious that not all parties are on the same page with how to jointly proceed on Economic Development. Not to mention, the more the JC-INVEST concept is changed, the more it becomes something it was never meant to be. More importantly, the discussion has become very confrontational, if not toxic. Our community deserves better and it sends the wrong message to those that might want to live, work, or do business here.

This has consumed a lot of time and I know we all have other projects to turn our attention to, including the day to day operations of overseeing city and county governments. Citizens can be assured that economic development has not and will not cease for the city of Madison. I will continue to investigate and explore options that will benefit economic development in Madison. I will continue to work with all sectors of our economy to organize and maximize the efforts of economic development in Madison.

Some might say that the last 16 months have been a waste of time: Absolutely not! Our community has had a long overdue discussion on our economic development process. Most organizations have taken a hard look at how they are operating and have made changes. Although we haven't agreed on everything, a good dialogue has taken place between the Mayor's office, City Council, County Commissioners, County Council and Hanover Town Council; and for that, I am thankful! This is a dialogue I intend to nurture. We have identified other sectors of our economic engine and have begun working together with their boards and executive directors, and will continue to do so. We have a completely restructured EDP, now known as JCIDC, and they have a new Executive Director. I am excited about continuing to partner with Jefferson County and the Town of Hanover in working with JCIDC. Most importantly, through the leadership of Bernie Murphy-Interim Executive Director of EDP and Nathan Hadley-newly hired JCIDC Executive Director, JCIDC has continued working during this time of uncertainty. Even though we don't have a formal agreement, a lot has been accomplished and set into motion; and for that, I want to thank all who have participated! Most importantly, I want to thank our community for their thoughts, prayers and patience. Let's move forward together.